

Story 1694 (1993 Tape 5)

Narrator: Sabit Uzun

Location: Trabzon, Trabzon  
Province (at bakery  
that was a front  
for the arrangement  
of call-girl appoint-  
ments)

Date: June 1993

Collected by Jo Ann Conrad

The Laz<sup>1</sup> Who Out-Riddled Himself

One day a Laz said to a friend of his, "Now I shall give you a riddle to solve. It is yellow. It is resting on the branch of a tree. And it sings 'Cik cik.' What is it?"

The friend thought about it for a moment and then he said, "It is a canary."

"No, it is not a canary," answered the Laz. The friend then guessed that it must be one of several other birds he named. After each guess, however, the Laz said, "No, it is not that."

After having made several incorrect guesses, the friend finally said to the Laz, "Well, what is it? Tell

The Laz answered, "It is a hamsi."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Laz people are a large ethnic minority living principally in Rize and Trabzon provinces in extreme north-eastern Turkey. They are stereotyped as being stupid, though they are not different from other people.

<sup>2</sup>An anchovy (5-9 inches long) found in the Black and Mediterranean seas. The hamsi is not only a staple of Laz diet but also almost a state of mind. Lazes talk, brag, and grow sentimental about this native fish.

## Story 1694

"How can that be?" his friend asked. "A hamsi cannot fly! How could it get up into a tree?"

"I put it there," answered the Laz.

"Furthermore, a hamsi is not yellow," protested the friend.

"I painted it yellow," said the Laz.

"But a hamsi does not sing 'Cik, cik'!"

"A-a-a-a-h! That is the really puzzling part of this riddle!" said the Laz.